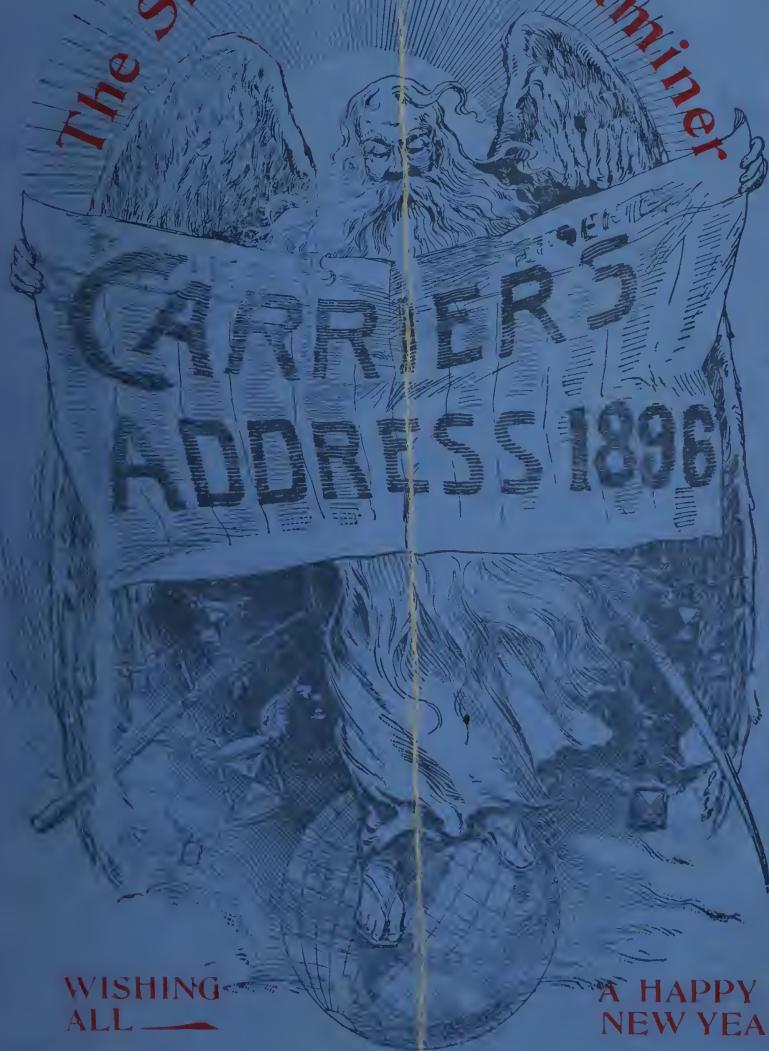


# The Sherbrooke Examiner



WISHING  
ALL —

A HAPPY  
NEW YEAR



## LITTLE JIM, THE CARRIER.

He came along one April day  
And seemed a very part of spring.  
It must have been his joyous way,  
Or else the sweet and hearty ring  
Of song and truth within his voice.  
At any rate, the office choice  
For carrier went at once to him  
As if the place had waited long  
And patiently for Little Jim,  
The lad whose work and merry song  
Went hand in hand, whose winning smile  
Was waiting for you all the while.



Why Little Jim was made his name  
Not any one around could tell.  
He was little. All the same  
The title seemed to fit him well.  
For there were gentleness and grace  
And wistfulness within his face;  
Likewise the solid place he had  
In every heart by all the men  
Was a protector to the lad.  
The editor within his den  
And every other felt that he  
Was watching o'er Jim's destiny.  
  
The lad was slender, but it seemed  
His suppleness thereby increased.  
His eyes were blue and ever beamed  
With kindly light. They never ceased  
To have a look of candor bold.  
But way within their depths was told

A tale of sadness, though he tried  
To keep them twinkling, merry, bright,  
And bravely sought to always hide  
Whate'er distress he knew. And fright  
Had never known the time or how  
To place its mark upon his brow.

His lips were cherry red and round,  
But gathered for his whistling oft,  
And tuneful was the cheery sound  
He made, so sweet and clear and soft.  
His hearers listened, filled with joy,  
And smiling said, "God bless the boy!"  
His hair, light brown and all astray,  
Curled ever at its graceful will.  
His nose, half pugged, in saucy way  
Provoked your warm affection still,  
And scattered freckles, growing dim,  
Completed "looks" for Little Jim.

Beneath appearances which showed  
The youngster rather homely, plain,  
He had a heart which ever flowed  
With gentleness, and never pain  
He caused to anything if he  
Could help it, and to always be  
Of some assistance seemed his aim.  
'Twas Jim to whom the office cat  
First showed a sign of being tame;  
'Twas he who made her sleek and fat  
By giving from his lunch the meat.  
In fact, he saved her from the street.

Of friends within the printing "shop"  
The editor was first and best.  
The foreman, too, would always stop  
To say a word. Quoth he, "I'm blessed  
If Little Jim ain't just the lad  
Of whom I'd like to be the dad."  
The pressman, sullen said to be,  
Was glad to have the youngster near,  
And everybody smiled to see  
The strangely large and glistening tear  
That trembled in his saddened eye—  
He looked on Jim through years gone by.

The men who daily at the "case"  
Set up the type would always turn  
To see the bright and gentle face.  
Reporters, young or old and stern,  
Could better stories write, said they,  
While cheered by Little Jim each day.  
When on his route he made his rounds,  
His friends were counted hundreds  
strong,  
And many, listening for his sounds,  
Looked out to see him romp along.  
He never failed, was never late  
With papers at the door or gate.

'Twas strange perhaps, yet simple quite,

That no one knew except by day  
This winsome boy, for when at night

He wended home the weary way,  
It was with fast and puzzling pace  
He sped, as if he ran a race

With any who might watch to know  
The winding alley, wretched street  
To which he always had to go

To gain his home, his poor retreat,  
The dreary spot which only he  
Could bravely guard from misery.

Within the low and crumbling walls  
To which he nightly went to sleep

His gayest, lightest, sweetest calls,  
Which told of love, devotion deep,

Were: "Mother, sister, here we are.  
How jolly that it isn't far  
To come!" And, bless his loving heart,

He'd run above a mile. Then they  
Who'd listened for his lively dart

Along the path would quickly say  
How glad they were to have him there,  
And none betrayed an aching care.

No wonder Little Jim was brave

With two such dear, unselfish souls  
To wait for him and always save

Some dainty morsel on the coals,  
To greet him with a hug and kiss—  
The only things abundant. This  
Darkened place, made clean and bright

And fortified by love and cheer,  
Vouchsafed by Jimmie's "salary night,"

Was rest and peace, sweet home and  
dear.

They three ne'er mentioned wretchedness  
Nor would admit the plain distress.

The mother's face was thin and sad

In spite of patient smiles and sweet,  
But otherwise much like the lad

She looked. His honest ways, his neat  
And curling hair so prone to stray  
He had from her. Her hair, now gray  
And thinning, waved in curves above

A whitened brow, whereon, engraved  
By patience, which is born of love,

Were records of her trials braved.  
The goodness, in Jim's face assured,  
Hers had, refined by things endured.

Jim's sister was a little maid

Of summers ten and brave as he,  
And though you saw her dresses frayed

You noticed in her face that she  
Was lovelier than princess fair,  
And anything which she might wear

Was neat and clean, though worn and old.

And she it was who made their life  
Less bitter. She it was who told

The fairy tales of hope. The strife  
To keep their home quite fresh and bright  
She half performed each morn and night.



Five years before the father, strong,

Had shouldered gayly all the work  
And made their lives a simple song  
Of peace. But ever dangers lurk

To drag protectors down, and so  
He, big and hearty, had to go.  
'Twas where they dig the glistening coal

He daily labored, and at last,  
With many another gen'rous soul,

He fell, a victim to a blast,  
And from the little home so bright  
The tender three came, worlds to fight.

So long as she could stand the strain

The mother tried support to find.

But, far too weak, the daily pain  
Was more than she could bear. Her  
mind,

So cheerful once, had filled at length  
With clouds, and all her little strength  
Exhausted in the struggle soon

Had left them hopeless. Then the boy,  
Our Little Jim, a lively boon

To dear ones precious, leapt with joy  
To fight the battle hard and great  
Against the grinding world and fate.



At first the lad had found it hard  
 To earn a penny, but the way  
 Is rarely 'gainst persistence barred,  
 And Jim was at it every day.  
 His creed was everlasting cheer  
 And honesty and never fear.  
 When, after struggling here and there  
 To keep them all alive, the place  
 As carrier came, the world seemed fair,  
 And just to see the radiant face  
 Which Jim took home would make a saint  
 Declare that heavenly joys were faint.

So there they were. This home which  
 seemed

So very lowly, black and small  
 Knew happiness. No one had dreamed  
 How little's needful, after all,  
 When cheerfulness and peace and love  
 Arrayed o'er misery stand above.  
 They at the office never knew

That Jim was brother, father, son,  
 Nor of the things he had to do,  
 Nor of the many he had done,  
 But all the time he found some way  
 Of adding to his scanty pay.

\* \* \* \* \*

And thus the spring and summer sped  
 Quite happily, and thus the three,

Contented with their little, said  
 That all was well, and thankfully  
 They lived, though hard it was to know  
 How far to make each penny go  
 That Jimmie earned. It's very sure

That sweet denial formed a part  
 Of each one's life. They could endure

The daily hardships, for the heart  
 Of each, by growing love sustained,  
 Could not by trials small be pained.

The autumn winds, which, strong and  
 cold,

Laid bare the twigs upon the trees,  
 Proclaimed the year was growing old.

And may times a chilling breeze  
 Through gaping chinks along the wall  
 Made cold the little home, and all  
 Were made to shiver and to dread

The wintry days of ice and snow,

And Jimmie puzzled in his head

The way to keep them warm to know

And doubled all his efforts brave  
 Their hearts from misery to save.

December, dreary, cold and bleak,

Found Jimmie much too poorly clad,

And though he dauntless seemed his cheek  
 Grew thin and purple. Gen'rous lad,

He bore too much, nor ever told  
 How like a knife he felt the cold.  
 He overtaxed himself at last.

With extra work, but still denied  
 His sickness till it came so fast

He barely reached his home. He sighed  
 In anguish then and fell at length,  
 Prostrated in his mind and strength.



Poor boy, the load that he had borne  
 O'erthrew him quite. The gentle two  
 Who nursed him feared that every morn  
 Would see the end. What love could do,  
 Unbounded love, they did for Jim  
 And daily saw his light grow dim.

In wild despair the mother went  
 To seek a doctor, beg his aid,  
 And one, as if by heaven sent,

Was glad to come, was more than paid  
 By sacred prayers. To save the lad  
 He used the utmost power he had.

\* \* \* \* \*

When Little Jim his record broke

And at the office failed to be,  
 The men looked queer, but no one spoke

At first, because they couldn't see  
 Just what it meant. But when the "boss"  
 Said, "Where is Little Jim?" the loss  
 Was personal to every one,

And all inquired and worried, too,

And though their daily tasks were done

They plainly showed their feelings blue.

No one had realized the vim

Inspired each hour by Little Jim.

Of course another youngster smart

They had to have without delay.

And got one, but in every heart  
 The thought, "This new one cannot stay  
 A minute after Jim comes back,"  
 Was shared by all. No subtle knack  
 Of learning fast, no effort great  
 To please displayed by carrier new,  
 Could change affection sealed by fate  
 Or ever Jimmie's place undo.  
 'Twas plain that now his blithesome call  
 Was sadly missed by one and all.



When two or three long days had gone  
 And Little Jim had not returned,  
 The men were plainly all forlorn  
 Nor tried to hide how much they yearned  
 To see his smile, and all agreed  
 He must be ill. They didn't need  
 To have one say no fault or blame  
 Could fall on Jim, no scheme or trick  
 Explain his absence, and they came  
 To saying: "He was looking sick  
 A week ago. Has any word  
 About the little lad been heard?"

And then subscribers going by  
 Commenced to stop, look in and ask:  
 "Where is that boy whose merry eye  
 Made children glad?" And so the task  
 Of saying sadly: "Wish we knew.  
 We don't know what we're going to do  
 Without him," was a burden dear.  
 The editor had grumbled low

For several days, and then "See here,"  
 Said he to all, "I want to know  
 Why no one in the shop here gives  
 Me notice where our Jimmie lives."

The men looked stupidly around  
 And scanned each other's faces blank,  
 But no one made an answering sound,  
 While each one's heart within him sank;  
 'Twas plain that anxious, willing, they  
 Had never known and could not say  
 Where home for Little Jim might be.

And when they found the breath to  
 speak  
 They wondered how it was that he  
 Had never let them know. "We'll seek  
 Him out at once," the chief then said,  
 And wondering how he scratched his head.

The best reporter with "a nose  
 For news"—sagacious, too, was he—  
 The editor then quickly chose  
 To hunt the lad up speedily.  
 "Just drop your other work today,"  
 Said he, "and do this right away."  
 The scribbler issued forth, and glad  
 Of this assignment did he feel,  
 For in his heart he liked the lad  
 And wished he might promote his weal.  
 But though he searched with patient skill  
 The home was undiscovered still.

Ashamed he felt. He'd "fallen down"  
 With all his splendid effort made.  
 Too well he knew the threat'ning frown  
 Which no excuse had e'er delayed.  
 But, strange enough, the chief well knew  
 He'd failed despite what skill could do,  
 And only said, "I'll try again  
 And keep on trying till we're beat."  
 Next day another of his men  
 With patient tramp through muddy  
 street  
 And alley searched and then came back  
 To say they still were off the track.

And then began about the place  
 A contest strange, a silence queer;  
 A mystery was in each face,  
 For all were hunting far and near,  
 And all were striving on the sly  
 To be the first to get an eye  
 On Little Jim. The foreman gray,  
 Reporters, and the pressman, too,  
 Were spending part of every day  
 To try some scheme or theory new,  
 But not a one would e'er admit  
 He daily made a duke of it.

The editor, just like the rest,

Was soft at heart on Jim, and so  
At length upon this hopeless quest

He felt a strange desire to go.  
Reporter instinct, long forgot,  
But latent in his brain, grew hot.  
To best his men was one desire,

To find his boy a stronger one,  
And thus with all his youthful fire  
He searched, although 'twas little fun  
To walk around through snow or rain  
And always find his labor vain.

Now, every one the house had passed

Where Jimmie lay, but no one thought  
The place inhabited nor cast

A look within this hovel fraught  
With dismal things and always quite  
As dark and silent as the night.  
The day before bright Christmas came

The people woke to look on snow.  
The editor that morn the same  
As ever plodded forth to go  
In search of Jim. "Great Scott," thought  
he,  
"What will his Christmas season be?"

And thinking sadly as he went

He neared unconsciously the spot  
He sought, and as his head he bent  
He saw within the snow, which not  
Before disturbed had been, the track  
Of one who'd come, but not gone back,  
And what was odd was that the feet

Had been directed to the door  
Of that worst shanty on the street,  
Which he had never thought before  
Contained a living soul. He stood,  
And something in these tracks seemed  
good.

A moment later opened wide

The weather beaten door, and there

A little woman stood inside

With sad, sweet face and marked with  
care.

A man, who seemed a doctor kind,  
Was leaving, and his worried mind  
Was easier. "He's safe at last,"

He smiling said and came away.  
The editor, whose heart beat fast,  
Just muttered, "Heaven bless the day!"  
He knew, though short the glance of joy,  
He'd found the mother and the boy.

Half wondering he stood, then stole

With guilty tread around until

He found a little crack, a hole

Which, near the sagging window sill,  
Permitted just a narrow view,  
And there he stuck his eye like glue.  
"A little sister, I declare,"

He whispered, and adown his cheek  
A tear was flowing. "Glad that there  
Was any chance to know," and, weak  
From very happiness, he braced  
Himself and toward the office raced.

Within the little house that morn

Was thankfulness before unknown,  
And hope at last had been reborn,  
And dark despair at length had flown.

The fever's fearful course had turned,  
And Jimmie's brow no longer burned.  
As peaceful as a babe he lay

And softly slept. His face, though white  
And thin, now smiled the lovely way

It had before, and gay and bright  
A sunbeam fell across the floor  
And seemed to whisper, "Weep no more."



One moment Little Jim awoke,

Looked up and saw two faces near.  
His weary smile, but cheerful, broke  
Like light from heaven on those dear  
And faithful ones. His look caressed  
Them; then he sighed and turned to rest.  
A sleep as gentle as the dew

Which kisses all the upturned flowers  
Stole on the lad. He never knew

The flight of sweet and restful hours.



And then at length he had a dream  
Which made the place enchanted seem.

He thought that in a banquet hall  
Were loaded tables bright and gay;  
That mother, sister, he and all  
The office force were there to stay,  
And that a private crowd they made,  
The honored of all there arrayed.  
And then such things to see and eat,  
Such glorious heaps, brought steaming  
in,

Of turkeys plump and pudding sweet!  
And such a hearty noise and din  
Of rattling cups and forks and knives  
They'd never heard in all their lives.

And later on it seemed that each  
Of those who from the office came  
Got up to make a brilliant speech,  
And all began then just the same.  
They started, "My dear madam, you"—  
And so until they all were through  
Turned always, plainly to address  
Themselves to Jimmie's mother, and  
Upon their words they laid such stress  
That he could hardly understand  
The meaning of it all, but still  
He felt his loving heartstrings thrill.

The first to speak, the foreman gray,  
Said, "Well—ahem—I feel that this—  
That this—I don't know what to say  
Except that in this hour of bliss  
I'm happy for the trifling part  
That I can take." He gave a start.  
"You see—what was that sentence? Oh,  
Yes. Don't you see on such a day  
We old ones don't know where to go,  
And feel so—feel—well, anyway  
There's no such spot as this in town."  
And thereupon he sat him down.

Then that reporter, oldest, best  
Of all the staff, arose. Said he:  
"We feel today that we are blessed;  
That you—that is to say, that we  
Are here, and, on the other hand"—  
And here he tried to firmly stand—  
"The fact is, madam, every one  
Of us is wrapped up in the lad  
And feels ashamed that we have done  
No better in the time we've had.  
We know—we—well, I'll have to quit.  
I can't make speeches worth a bit."

"I don't see what he means by that,"  
Thought Little Jim, but then arose  
The pressman, and he held his hat

And rubbed with nervous hand his nose.  
"There's nothing much to say," he said,  
And swallowed air and scratched his head,  
"And you—you know, of course you do,  
Just how we feel—just how—of course—  
And that's the way we feel toward you.  
Excuse me; I'm a little hoarse."  
And so he was, and on his chair  
He sat and wisely lingered there.

"Well, this is getting funny," thought  
Our Little Jim, "and every man  
Who's tried to speak has tripped and  
caught.

I never saw a queerer plan.  
I wish the editor would show  
Them how a banquet speech should go."  
And then, as if his wish to fill,  
The editor arose, but now  
He looked as if he might be ill.  
No sternness sat upon his brow.  
His manner gruff was gone, and quaint  
He stood, as gentle as a saint.



"Our hearts are full," he said at last,  
"And I have heard in every voice  
The welling tears that came so fast  
That none could speak. But we rejoice  
To find you all, and, God be praised,  
To find the clouds of darkness raised.  
These friends, who now for many years  
Have been companion—yes, and more—  
Have told you brokenly the fears  
That made our lonesome hearts so sore.  
I'll have to cease. My eyes are dim.  
God bless you both and Little Jim!"



His voice indeed was choked. His face  
 No longer hid his feelings strong,  
 And when he finished gone the place,  
 And gone the tables and the throng,  
 And Jimmie's eyes now pierced the gloom  
 Within his own dark, lowly room.  
 He knew that he had dreamed, but now  
 He saw with waking eyes that they  
 Who spoke were in his home, and how  
 They found the house he could not say.  
 But there they were, and bundles big  
 Were piled around on every rig.

Yes, bundles, boxes, baskets, bags,  
 For all these men were big in soul,  
 And theirs were hearts to bleed when rags  
 Were clothes and people froze for coal.  
 That foreman gray had known a year  
 When want and misery were near.  
 A newsboy once, barefooted, he  
 With brother younger strove to make  
 A living, and, though tenderly  
 He tried to watch, death came to take  
 The little fellow. Thus he had  
 A heart to love this Jimmie lad.



That old and sharp reporter, too,  
 Was tender hearted, though he tried  
 To stolid be; his eyes of blue  
 Now all indifference belied.  
 He called a wretched time to mind  
 When all the world had been unkind;  
 When, as an office "devil," he  
 Had helped support a mother, and

He thought of all the misery  
 That came. And so when Jimmie's  
 "sand"

He saw he felt 'twas good to live,  
 That he might aid and comfort give.

The editor—whose melting heart  
 Proclaimed him now for what he was  
 And showed that gruffness had no part  
 To live in—did not weep because  
 Of times remembered—though indeed  
 He'd been a carrier once in need  
 Of help—it was because his life  
 Had been so full of longing just  
 To have a son, and when his wife  
 Had died he felt his faith and trust  
 Go with her; then this Little Jim  
 Had waked mysterious chords in him.

But, oh, that sullen pressman there—  
 No longer sullen, only sad—  
 Who, looking now with blinded stare,  
 Saw only in the past a lad;  
 His son he was, and just about  
 Like Jim, except he wasn't stout  
 Of arm and limb. And every day,  
 When Jim's true eyes had met his own,  
 He felt the tears and turned away;  
 It seemed that backward years had flown  
 And once again his darling boy  
 Was filling all his soul with joy.

Thus these and all the other men,  
 So used to business ways and hard,  
 Felt all their pulses beat again,  
 Affection's gates again unbarred,  
 And when of Jimmie's life they knew  
 They felt that all that they could do  
 Was not enough. The mother stood  
 With face made holy in the light  
 Which these rough angels cast, nor could  
 She speak. Her little girl so bright,  
 Clung happy at her side—the pair  
 A picture made surpassing fair.

And seeing all with wonderment  
 The weakened boy raised up in bed,  
 And one, whose eyes were on him bent,  
 That editor, came quick and said,  
 "Why, Jimmie, boy, awake at last?  
 Thank God you're well—the danger's  
 past.

You rogue, why did you never tell  
 Us where you were and let us know  
 You were not feeling strong and well?  
 I don't know when we've worried so."  
 Thus gently chiding, he caressed  
 The head upon the pillow pressed.

Jim's mother and his sister then  
 Came quickly forward, and the crowd  
 Of awkward, kind and tender men  
 Could not resist, and feeling proud  
 To see again the winsome look  
 On Jimmie's face came up and took  
 Their places near. The lad, abashed,  
 Blushed faintly thus to have them stand  
 Around his cot. His eye then flashed  
 With merry fun; he raised his hand  
 To feebly shake with all and said,  
 "I'm sorry to receive in bed."

They loudly laughed, but it was queer  
 To see their brimming eyes and see  
 Them all confused because a tear  
 Would come, provoked by gayer, yet  
 But talking lively every one  
 They made the place resound with fun.  
 They spoke of Christmas, Jim the while  
 In wonder lost—he'd been so ill  
 He didn't know 'twas come. His smile  
 Was lovely then, and with a will  
 He rose up straight, that he could call  
 "A Merry Christmas to you all!"

They almost shouted forth in glee  
 Their answers back, and then at length  
 They said goodbye to all the three.  
 They feared to tax their laddie's strength  
 By staying longer, but before  
 They went they wanted one thing more—  
 A promise—which they got—that they  
 Could come to spend the afternoon  
 And bring the dinner Christmas day.  
 And as they went it seemed too soon  
 To leave that hallowed, dear retreat  
 Which looked so shabby from the street.

The mother in amazement sat  
 And thought and blessed, when all had  
 gone.

The little maid, with soothing chat,  
 Made Jimmie sleep. His face, though  
 wan,

Was happy, and the fever's flush  
 Had gone and left a lovely blush  
 Of health upon his wasted cheek.

She then, with silent, lively feet,  
 Approached the mother—not to speak,  
 But just to join the blessings sweet  
 Which there ascended—and the men  
 Who gave were all rewarded then.

Within the bags and boxes brought  
 By all those friends, unknown before,  
 They found that all that careful thought  
 Could e'er suggest was there, and more.  
 Of dresses, garments, shawls and wraps

And shoes and all the other traps  
 That people need there was a sight,  
 Besides a wondrous large supply  
 Of things to eat and presents bright  
 For every one—they had to cry  
 In happiness again that they  
 Were thus remembered Christmas day.



And such a day it was, and, oh,  
 Such joyfulness on every face!  
 For all the "office" had to go,  
 And thus they filled the little place  
 Quite brimming full, and merriment  
 Just overflowed and bubbling went  
 To every heart, and every hour  
 Was gayer—aye, and far more bright  
 Than Jim had dreamed—but, oh, the flower  
 Of all the goodness of the sight  
 Was that compassion, aid and love,  
 Fixed deep in man by him above.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 There's nothing more to tell. The reign  
 Of sorrow ceased, and dread despair  
 And hunger, with their throes of pain,  
 Were banished, and a joy was there  
 To take their places. All the men  
 Became protectors, and again  
 The three were cared for tenderly,  
 And Jim this blessing gave: "I pray  
 That every one's New Years may be  
 As sweet as you've made ours today."  
 God bless him—more he could not do,  
 For that included me and you.

PHILIP MIGHELS.





